

DISCUSSION GUIDE for VIDEO
“INTRICATE MINDS:
Understanding Classmates
With Asperger Syndrome”

I. PREPARATION

- a. Determine if you have any students with Asperger Syndrome in your class and consult with their parents to learn if those students choose to be identified as having Asperger Syndrome. If so, determine if they'd like to participate in your presentation and the discussion after the video. Some students with Asperger Syndrome may want to be in the room while the video is played and others may not.
- b. Some parents may volunteer to be part of the discussion and answer questions.
- c. Consult with your school administration and (if possible) a school counselor when considering identifying a particular child's disability.
- d. Be prepared to make a presentation and not associate it with any individual students. In this case, prepare how you'd answer questions from students who identify classmates with behaviors described in the video. If a child with Asperger Syndrome is concerned about being singled out, it may be better to have the presentation made to the entire school in an assembly.

II. PREVIEWING THE CONTENT

- a. Tell the students they will see young adults who think differently and who may act differently. Mention that the students in the video all attend regular school classes for all or part of the day. (*Some of the students also attend some special classes.*)
- b. The video will explain how these students feel and how they would like to be treated.
- c. Vocabulary words you may wish to discuss before viewing:
 - i. *Sensitivity* – experiencing with the senses: touch, sight, sound, taste. The more intensely you experience things, the more sensitive you are.
 - ii. *Empathy* -- understanding another's feelings or situation
 - iii. *Champion* -- one who defends or supports another person

III. PLAYING THE VIDEO

- a. The video runs 12 minutes.

IV. CLASS DISCUSSION

- a. Ask the students what they learned from the video.
- b. Ask the students if they can recall what the video said that students with Asperger Syndrome might be like.
- c. Ask the students how they might help another student who has Asperger Syndrome feel accepted in their class.

- d.* Ask the students how they might handle a situation where a student is being harassed or bullied.
- e.* Ask the students how they might feel if classmates ignored them or excluded them from activities.
- f.* Ask the students to offer ideas about ways to make friends with kids who seem different and how to include such students in activities.
- g.* Ask students to role-play situations and practice: opening a conversation, inviting students to participate in an activity, and asking a bully to stop teasing someone.
- h.* Suggest that while the video was about kids with a specific condition (Asperger Syndrome), the points it makes apply to the way they should treat any student who acts a bit different and has trouble fitting in.
- i.* If necessary, repeat that not every person with AS is a genius – that it affects different people in different ways.
- j.* If asked about the historical figures in the video, repeat that it's not possible to know for sure whether they had AS. Emphasize the important point is that people looked past their "different" behaviors to see their worth as people.

V. CONCLUSION

It's good to conclude with a reminder about what the video asks classmates to do: treat others as they would like to be treated.

VI. Follow-up

- a.* Conduct a follow-up discussion about a week later and ask students if they have been able to put into action any of the recommendations from the video.
- b.* Ask students to continue to look for ways to include students who are left out of group activities.

For more information, contact Coulter Video at 336-608-4224
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